

Assemblyman **PAUL KORETZ**

Forty-second Assembly District

proudly representing the communities of West Hollywood, Beverly Hills, Los Angeles, Century City, Westwood, Bel Air, Brentwood, West Los Angeles, Hollywood, Hancock Park, Universal City, Studio City, and Sherman Oaks



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ASSEMBLYMAN KORETZ RECOGNIZES WORLD AIDS DAY ASKS GOVERNOR TO END BUREAUCRATIC FOOT-DRAGGING ON HIV BILLS

(Sacramento) Assemblyman Paul Koretz (D-West Hollywood) recognized December 1st as World AIDS Day by calling on Governor Schwarzenegger to speed up implementation of two HIV bills that will reduce HIV infections and improve treatment for people living with HIV.

"All reasonable excuses have been exhausted and it is now time for the Governor to intervene and order an end to his administration's bureaucratic foot-dragging on the implementation of AB 2197 passed in 2002 and AB 879 passed in 2003. The State Department of Health Services has had more than ample time to implement the provisions of these laws," said Assemblyman Koretz.

AB 2197 requires the California Department of Health Services (DHS) to obtain the necessary federal waivers for a pilot program that encourages HIV patients currently covered by state MediCal coverage on a fee-for-service basis, to voluntarily move into managed care plans. The resulting savings are to be used for expanding MediCal coverage to uninsured, low income persons with HIV. Implementation of this cost-neutral plan has been derailed by bureaucratic delay. "The drafting of the federal waiver application took over a year and half to complete and DHS still has no timeline for when AB 2197 will be fully implemented," said Koretz.

AB 879 instructs DHS to convene a task force to develop state-approved physician guidelines for using post-exposure prophylaxis (PEP) in cases of non-occupational exposure to HIV. The task force met and developed the guidelines a year ago, but DHS has failed to make the guidelines available to physicians on the Department's website. PEP treatment often can prevent HIV infection after an exposure to HIV, but treatment must begin within 72 hours. Physician guidelines are needed to help doctors who must make snap decisions regarding what types of exposures warrant PEP treatment. Without these guidelines some people may be unnecessarily undergoing the 2-4 week regimen of antiretroviral medications while others who should have the treatment aren't getting it at all. "Web posting of already drafted guidelines is a simple matter that should occur right away," added Koretz.

"These bills passed with bipartisan support, can be implemented at virtually no cost to the state, and will prevent HIV infections and expand treatment for the uninsured. World AIDS Day is an opportunity for all of us to reflect on what we can do to stop this deadly disease. The Governor's reflection hopefully will result in the implementation of AB 2197 and AB 879 as soon as possible," said Koretz.

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